

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-01 TRSE-00 SY-05 L-03 SCA-01 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9450

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AFSP, US, UR

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS OF NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL

REF: MOSCOW 1408

1. DURING FEBRUARY 2 MEETING WITH USA DIVISION COUNSELOR S. B. CHETVERIKOV, POLITICAL COUNSELOR RAISED QUESTION SOVIET CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE OF NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL (REFTEL). HE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH SOVIET AUTHORITIES RIGHT TO INSPECT BAGGAGE OF NON-DIPLOMATIC EMBASSY PERSONNEL NOT BEING QUESTIONED, IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH PRACTICE WOULD NECESSARILY BE FOLLOWED BY RECIPROCAL ACTION BY U.S. CUSTOMS. ONCE PROCEDURE BECAME A STANDARD POLICY GOVERNED BY U.S. CUSTOMS REGULATIONS, DISCONTINUANCE WOULD BE DIFFICULT. DESIRABLE COURSE OF ACTION, THEREFORE, WOULD BE TO NIP PROBLEM AT OUTSET.

2. IN RESPONSE, CHETVERIKOV INDICATED THAT THIS PROBLEM WAS NOT A SIMPLE ONE AND IMPLIED THAT ANY SOLUTION WOULD REQUIRE CONCURRENCE BY CUSTOMS AND OTHER SOVIET BUREAUCRACIES. HE SAID THAT THIS WILL BE RAIED AT UPCOMING U.S. - SOVIET CONSULAR TALKS AND WILL HOPEFULLY BE RESOLVED THERE AND INDICATED THERE WAS NOT MUCH CHANCE OF MOVING POSITIVELY BEFORE SUCH  
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TALKS TAKE PLACE.

3. AT DINNER FEBRUARY 2, CHETVERIKOV TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT HE HAD LOOKED INTO THIS MATTER MORE CAREFULLY. HE ASSERTED THAT SOVIET EMBASSY NON-DIPLO-MATIC PERSONNEL ON SEVERAL OCCASTIONS AND ON A CONTINUING BASIS HAD BAGGAGE INSPECTED BY U.S. CUSTOMS OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS. WHEN POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD OTHERWISE, CHETVERIKOV REPLIED THAT THIS HAD BEEN CHECKED CAREFULLY WITH SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND SOVIETS WERE CERTAIN OF THIS. HE ADDED THAT SOVIETS HAD ALSO HAD DIFFICULTY WITH CUSTOMS FOR THOSE PEOPLE GOING TO THE U.S. WITH B-2 VISAS.

4. CHETVERIKOV THEN REPEATED HIS EARLIER ASSERTION THAT THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE RAISED AT U.S. - SOVIET CONSULAR TALKS AND WOULD HOPEFULLY BE RESOLVED IN THAT CONTEXT. IN THE MEANWHILE, CHETVERIKOV SUGGESTED THAT MATTERS BE ELFT AS THEY HAD BEEN IN THE PAST. IT WAS SOVIET IMPRESSION, HE SAID, THAT THIS WAS NOT VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION AND THAT IT HAD BEEN RAISED UNNECESSARILY TO POLITICAL LEVEL. HE IMPLIED THAT IF WE LET MATTER REST UNTIL CONSULAR TALKS THAT SOVIET CUSTOMS WOULD ONLY ASK ON OCCASION TO OPEN BAGGAGE OF NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. HOWEVER, HE REFUSED TO BE SPECIFIC AS TO ROUGHLY WHAT PROPORTION OF SUCH BAGGAGE WOULD BE OPENED BY SOVIET CUSTOMS. NOR COULD HE GIVE ANY GUARANTEES ON THIS SUBJECT, AS HE EMPHA-SIZED THAT HE WAS ONLY SPEAKING "PERSONALLY."

5. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CLARIFY WITH SOVIET EMBASSY WHAT INSPECTION PROBELMS SOVIETS HAVE IN US SINCE CHETVERIKOV'S ASSERTIONS APPEAR TO CONFLICT WITH 75 STATE 294130. AS NOTED REFTEL, WE PLAN TO INCLUDE TOPIC IN CONSULAR TALKS, BUT BELIEVE INTERIM DECISION SHOULE BE MADE WITHIN FEW DAYS TO RELEASE UNACCOMPANIED MSG BAGGAGE ALREADY DELAYED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. IF SOVIETS HERE REMAIN UNWILLING TO PASS ITEMS WITHOUT INSPECTION, ONLY OPTION APPEARS OPENING THEM AND TAKING RECIPROCAL ACTION IN WASHINGTON. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE. END COMMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONNEL, CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS, PERSONAL EFFECTS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 FEB 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, AFSP, US, UR  
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**Type:** TE  
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